

131 /99 cont./

167 As is seen, the Tukano group is found distributed both in Colombian territory and Brazilian, and the migratory movements of natives between these two countries are quite frequent.

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The Tukano work the land by means of the slash-and-burn method. The piece of ground intended for agriculture is always cleaned of underbrush and trees by the /100/ men, a job at which each man works individually or assisted by his male relatives. At one time, before the arrival of the Creole rubber workers in the region, the trees and underbrush were cut with stone axes, but since the arrival of the rubber worker the machete has been introduced, and today no Tukano Indian would consider using the lithic instrument again.

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Trees of great size are generally left in the place in which they fell, but small trees and bushes are burned toward the end of summer, or the dry season. The ashes obtained from the burning are used as fertilizer to improve the soil, but owing to the thin vegetal layer, to erosion, and to the general poorness of the land, the Tukano Indian is obliged to select and clear a new garden every three or four years. The method of crop rotation is not practiced because the forest vegetation rapidly returns to invade the land that is not cultivated and tended. The field under cultivation rarely exceeds one or two hectares.

The planting is done immediately after finishing the burning, among the stumps of the felled trees and the trunks of the toppled trees. Probably the only aboriginal implement used in the planting is the planter's stick (2).

2. Digging-stick /this term is given in English/.

which is used primarily to loosen the earth and to open holes in it for planting seeds or young plants. The ground is rarely cultivated and tended after the planting is done, but weeds are pulled out and care is taken that the forest does not invade the garden.

- 244 A woman is proud of two aspects of her work in gardening: total
 433 productivity and the quality of her manioc cake. Productivity reflects
 (462) favorably upon her own efforts and, even more important, upon the
 efforts of her husband, who makes the clearing. The quality of manioc
 cake depends upon the quality of the tubers and upon the variety of
 manioc cultivated. Women are knowledgeable about manioc. They
 244 are familiar with many varieties, their food qualities as well as their
 244 characteristics of growth. They are experimental as well. When wom-
 (571) en from different communities meet, they talk about manioc farming,
 exchange information, and very often exchange cuttings. Thus, a
 garden includes five or six varieties of manioc. The *Bahukiwa* cul-
 (439) tivated eight varieties, one of which, a yellow variety, they had ob-
 tained from Indians on the Amazon below Manaos. Like any good
 farmer, a woman in the course of time eliminates poor strains for
 (252) better ones. Many women have personal recipes for a manioc cake
 244 blended from several varieties of tuber. Gardening, being a woman's
 462 domain, is a totally secular activity. If crops grow poorly the women

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fig. 3. Preparing manioc.